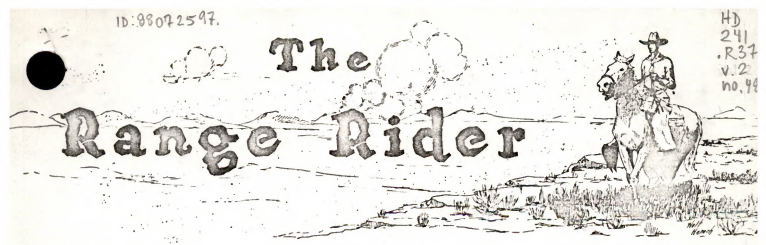
The Range Rider



A TRIBUTE TO OUR ADVISORY BOARDS

Regional Grazier Dierking recently made an analysis of advisory board elections in his region. This analysis revealed the following interesting facts:

Of the original 61 board members elected in 1935 to serve on the first six New Mexico grazing district boards, all but 17 are still serving on boards in that State. Four of the 17 resigned for personal reasons; three accepted positions with Government agencies; two moved out of the district concerned; three are now deceased; only five were not reelected.

Today there are 64 advisory board members on the seven New Mexico grazing district boards. Of these, 42 have served continually since 1935; eight are members of the new Chaco District; the remaining 14 have been selected by the stockmen to fill vacancies created by resignation, death, et cetera.

The board of the Magdalena District (New Mexico No. 2-B) is a shining example of public service and cooperative effort. Today the men serving on that board are the seven original members who were elected to represent the stockmen in that district in 1935. Their reelection year after year is a splendid tribute to the excellent work and cooperation of these seven men whose names we want to honor here:

H. B. Birmingham, Horse Springs, New Mexico
George Goze, Magdalena, New Mexico
James L. Hubbell, Horse Springs, New Mexico
G. C. Luna, Los Lunas, New Mexico
A. G. Seis, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Tom Summers, Santa Fe, New Mexico
A. D. Woofter, Magdalena, New Mexico

The record of the New Mexico boards is similar to that established in many other "grazing" States. The contributions of all

board members who have given freely of their time and effort during the past five years have played an important part in the administration of the Taylor Grazing Act. The significance of the continuity of service on the Magdalena and other boards may be said to represent three things: (1) Good service on the part of the elected representatives of the livestock industry, (2) an appreciation of that service by local stockmen, and (3) a job in the management and conservation of the public lands that is worthy of the donation by the advisory board members of their time and effort beyond any hope of personal reward.

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NEWS FROM THE LANDS BRANCH

Regional Grazier Brooks has reported the discovery of Indian writings of historic interest on land in the Mojave Grazing District and on land in southern Nevada. In order that the writings may be properly protected and preserved arrangements have been made for posting the land and the matter has been brought to the attention of the Director of the National Park Service.

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PRECIOUS WATER

An interesting story has been sent into the Washington office by Mr. C. C. Anderson of the Utah Writers' Project about unique stock water developments constructed by Mr. J. J. Watson in Utah's Bonneville Grazing District.

Mr. Watson, a native of England, has been running cattle on Utah's west desert since 1886. For 31 years of this time he depended upon small reservoirs which he had dug out of solid rock on high elevations and in which water collected from seepage or following showers. Referred to as "pools" or "pot hole reservoirs" this type of natural or developed water hole is similar to that used in the Southwest and referred to by the Spanish-speaking people as a "guaje."

Although a well now supplements the water from the "pools" constructed by Mr. Watson, they represent what might be accomplished through foresight and resourcefulness when the need is great.

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Idaho reports that a hydraulic ram has been placed in Little Wood River to be used to fill a 15,000-gallon storage tank. This will make it possible for stockmen to fill water tank-trucks and haul water out to unwatered range, thus removing the need to trail stock back and forth to the river for water and prevent trailing damage to the range forage and loss in weight by the livestock.

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MR. AND MRS. BLUEBUNCH WHEATGRASS ARE VISITED BY THE STORK!

Mr. and Mrs. Bluebunch Wheatgrass (alias Agropyron spicatum) who ten years ago established their home on the northeastern slope of Horse Ridge located in the Crooked River Grazing District, Oregon, are the proud parents of eighteen youngsters. These youngsters, although scarcely three weeks of age, are waving their arms in unison with the gentle fall breezes and pushing their roots down into the soil to gather the food necessary to withstand the winter months ahead.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass have cause to rejoice for this is the first year since 1937 that their efforts to produce new plants have been successful. They produced a bountiful crop of seed in 1938 but the dry fall of the same year and the drought of the following year caused the death of all young plants. During the season of 1938 Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass were compelled to take a semi-siesta, but they did produce a few leaves which enabled them to keep the food supply of their root system intact for future use. Luckily for them their old and new growth of leaves was not grazed by livestock during the 1938 season. Old Mother Nature came to their rescue in the fall of 1938 and broke the drought with rains which started the growth of all plant life. This growth was sustained during the winter months which were mild and moist. The old growth was broken off by the storms, strewn about on the ground to be worked into the soil, eventually forming humus to soften the soil and to absorb moisture.

The spring of 1940 found Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass enjoying excellent health. They were chuck-full of vitamins and the bunch of blades which they produced was a sight to behold. They had reached out with their roots into new soil and had gathered an immense store of plant food which created a desire for reproduction. They sent up fifty seed stalks, and on these seed stalks 750 viable seeds were produced. These seeds ripened about the first of July and were ready for distribution when misfortune struck the area. A severe hailstorm pounded all the seed from the stalks and instead of the seed being carried here and there by the winds, it was deposited close to the parent plant. Yet in spite of the hailstorm, the ants, rodents, and birds which took their toll of the seed crop, 18 young Wheatgrasses survived.

The troubles of the young Wheatgrasses were not over, however, for as Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass looked down upon their children they knew that only one or two would survive the competition for soil and moisture, and rodents and grazing animals, but under the circumstances they decided that the year had been a fruitful one. They stretched their new fall growth as far up as possible to look over the hill to see how their neighbors had fared. They could see the children of many other Wheatgrasses playing in the breezes and commented that the sight was an eyeful after the strenuous and fruitless labor of the past few years. It seemed to them that there was a plant of a

deep-rooted variety on every square foot of soil and that in the same square foot there were several plants of the short-rooted varieties which would compete for the moisture during the spring months when there was sufficient for all plant needs and then hibernate during the summer months leaving the remaining moisture for the deep-rooted plants. In the fall the short-rooted plants would again come to life and utilize the moisture from the light rains so as to produce an early green growth which would furnish the nutrients lacking in the cured forage of the deep-rooted grasses. Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass agreed that there would be many leaves left at the end of the grazing season to shade the soil and form humus so that seeds dropped in the future would have an easier task in finding a home and a better chance for survival.

The entire plant life seemed to cry out that "Happy days are here again--bring on the deer and the antelope, the sheep and the cattle in season and in proper numbers and we will safely and gladly donate part of our bodies for their existence and well-being. We would rather share our growth for grazing purposes and soil conservation than to die a death caused by competition for food and moisture among ourselves, but we must have part of our yearly growth left to return to the soil for protection and to form humus so that a large percent of our seeds will find homes and rear a family of their own. Many of the young plants will not survive, but we know that in death they help feed the insect, rodent, or animal that would otherwise have destroyed the plant already in production or the plant which showed promise of production."

So as Mr. and Mrs. Wheatgrass gazed about they saw a few snowflakes settling on the hillside and they joined hands and slowly descended below the surface of the ground into their root system where they had plenty of food stored to carry them through the winter months and to take care of the 75 new seed stalks already in the embryo stage ready to shoot upwards in the 1941 season. Their tasks all completed, they stretched out waiting for the sleep which Jack Frost had promised would be a deep one.

--Charles C. Parsell, Crooked River Grazing District

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ADDITION TO ELY GRAZING DISTRICT

A block of land embracing 691,200 acres has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior for inclusion in the Ely Grazing District (Nevada No. 4). Administration of this area under the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act met with the approval of the majority of stockmen concerned and was recommended by the advisory board of the district. The development of stock water facilities and flood and erosion control measures in conjunction with a general range improvement and range management program is already under consideration for the new area. More even distribution of livestock and proper seasonal use of the range will be made possible.

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